

Vegetation Management

2010 Annual Report



CLARK COUNTY NOXIOUS WEED CONTROL BOARD

Richard Fazio, District 1

Forest Shuler, District 2

Ralph Duchie, District 3

Louanne Renner, District 4, Vice Chair

Craig Lynch, District 5, Chair

Charles Brun, Extension Agent, Ex-Officio

Noxious weeds are a very serious threat to the health and safety of county residents, wildlife, and habitat. It is widely recognized that noxious weeds are an economic threat to industries such as agribusiness and forestry. They also impact public infrastructure such as highways and stormwater facilities.

In January 2010, Vegetation Management was incorporated into the county's newly established Department of Environmental Services. The division has the primary focus of controlling noxious weeds on all public land, private land, and waterways in Clark County as mandated under Washington State Law 17.10.140. The division also performs contract vegetation control for various county agencies through agreements.

Providing advice and support to the division is a six-member, volunteer Clark County Noxious Weed Control Board, established by the county in accordance with state law.

Environmental Impact of Noxious Weeds

Responsibly protecting our natural lands from noxious weed infestation is important as both noxious weeds and the improper use of herbicides can have negative environmental impacts. Vegetation Management reduces these impacts by using best management practices such as spraying only where needed and targeting individual plants with applications, rather than utilizing broadcast methods.

The division also adheres to the county's Environmentally Responsible Purchasing Policy. Herbicides are not used if they are:

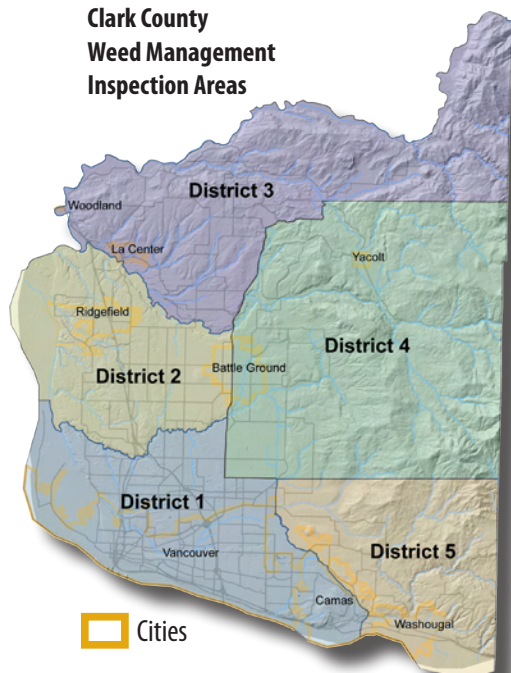
- Known, likely or probably a carcinogen.
- Listed on Washington State list of Persistent, Bioaccumulative Toxins (PBTs).
- Known to be a reproductive toxicant.
- Known to have "high" persistent rating.
- Known to have a mobility rating of "high", "very high", or with specific label warning about groundwater hazard.
- Known to be an endocrine disruptor.
- Known to be highly, very, or extremely toxic to birds, fish, bees, or wildlife.

Controlling Noxious Weeds - Reports and Actions

Controlling Weeds Along Our Roadways

The county is separated into five areas to manage weed infestations on private and public lands, including environmentally sensitive habitats and other county-owned lands.

Clark County Weed Management Inspection Areas



During 2010, a total of 2,062 reports and follow-up actions were taken on noxious weed infestations. This is a 12% increase above the ten-year average. Reports are generated from staff inspections and public complaints. "Actions" include a variety of activities ranging from educational

information and letters mailed to land owners to code enforcement activities. In 2010, Vegetation Management sent 1,336 warning letters, a 48% increase over 2009. Violation actions also showed an increase with 101 recorded for the year. These increases reflect the success of field inspections and compliance activities. Compliance is usually achieved through education and direct contact with property owners.

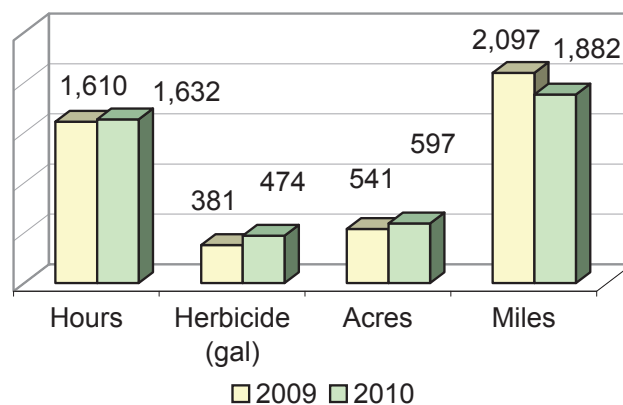
The number of reports and actions in 2010 compared to the six-year average is as follows: District 1 - no change; District 2 - increased 18%; District 3 - increased 13%; District 4 - increased 44%; and District 5 - a slight decrease.

Tansy ragwort was the most common noxious weed reported for 2010. Infestations of garlic mustard, a Class A noxious weed, has increased significantly since first detected in 2004. Other "top offenders" are poison hemlock, Canada thistle, and meadow knapweed.



Clark County Public Works contracts with Vegetation Management to control weeds along roadways, which increases safety and reduces maintenance and repairs. Weed control is done primarily using a truck-mounted, computerized sprayer which logs spray data and aids in developing maintenance schedules. The unit is used to maintain areas around guardrails, along the right of way, roads scheduled for surface and edge maintenance, and at county maintenance facilities and gravel pits.

Roadways & Facilities 2009 to 2010



Bottom left: Tansy tagwort

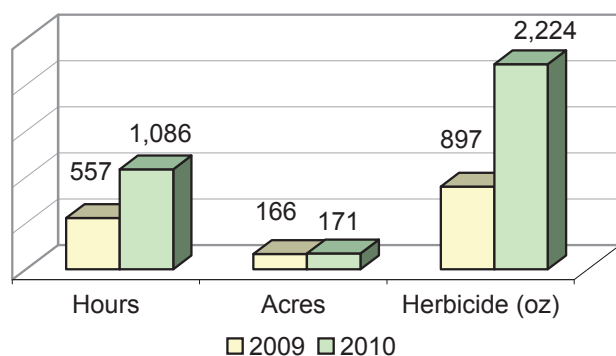
Below: Roadside blackberries



Vegetation Management On County Lands

During 2010, 1,528 acres of mitigated wetlands, stormwater facilities, and county-owned Legacy Lands were treated for noxious weeds. Control treatments occur throughout the year and on different schedules for different types of weeds. For example, poison hemlock control takes place in April and May and again in the fall. Such work for garlic mustard takes place in March through early June, with follow-up in the fall. Blackberries are treated from late summer until the first frost. Canada thistle is controlled in early spring with a fall follow-up.

Stormwater Facilities 2009 to 2010



Stormwater Facilities

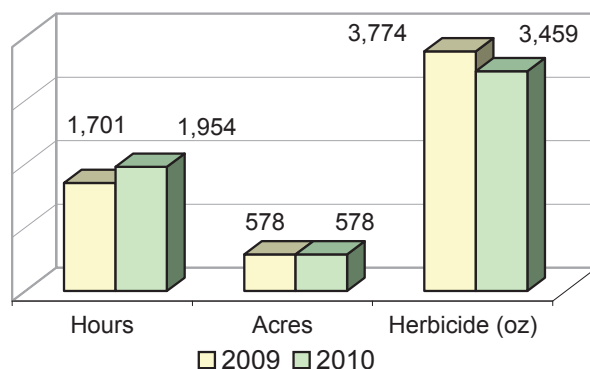
Vegetation Management provided weed control at 96 stormwater facilities (171 acres) in 2010. Eleven new sites required removal of invasive trees and blackberries. Staff hours spent on stormwater facilities increased 95% over the prior year.



Above: Stormwater facility
Left: Canada thistle



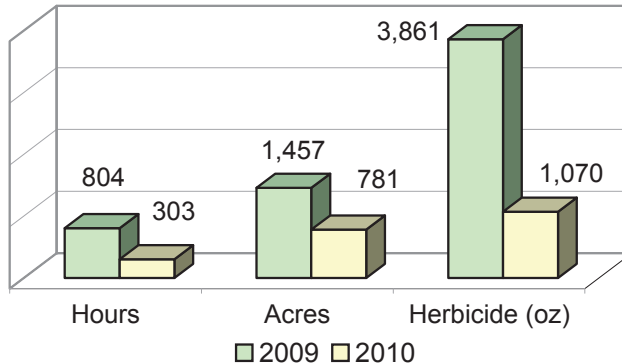
Mitigated Wetlands 2009 to 2010



Mitigated Wetlands

Vegetation Management provided weed control maintenance to 70 mitigated wetland sites. These sites offset the impact of construction and roadway improvement projects, such as Fairgrounds Community Park, NE Ward Road, NE 72nd Avenue, and NE 88th Street.

Legacy Lands 2009 to 2010



Legacy Lands

Eight sites were targeted for weed control activities on county-owned *Legacy Lands* located along the East Fork Lewis River, Vancouver Lake, and Salmon Creek.

Staff used foliar spraying, tractor mowing, and some backpack spraying to control weeds. Sites with public access are posted prior to spraying.

Special Control Projects

Japanese Knotweed

Vegetation Management partnered with many local groups and individuals to survey the Washougal and East Fork Lewis rivers for Japanese, Bohemian, Himalayan, and giant knotweed. Information was provided to hundreds of landowners.

Control treatment was administered to 169,438 knotweed canes on 70 properties.

Garlic Mustard

Garlic Mustard infestations are known in three geographically distinct areas in Clark County: Daybreak Park, Salmon Creek Park (Klineline), and in Camas-Washougal. In these areas, both hand pulling and herbicides are used as control methods.

The Daybreak infestation is contained within 1.5 acres. During the past year, the Salmon Creek infestation has increased from 40 acres to 190 acres. The Camas-Washougal infestation is defined as 240 acres.

Volunteers and corrections crews devoted 804 hours pulling garlic mustard at these sites, including two hand-pulling volunteer events organized by staff. These combined efforts resulted in removal of 66,480 pounds of garlic mustard.



Growing Green Project

Vegetation Management staff have joined forces with other Environmental Services staff on the Growing Green project. This project enhances county properties with native vegetation. Plantings have occurred on seven sites, including three stormwater facilities. This represents over 60 acres planted with more than 35,000 native plants and trees.

Outreach & Information

Staff provides information to the public about eradicating noxious weeds and the problems associated with infestations. The majority of this work is done through direct contact, letters, and field visits. Staff participated in the Clark County Fair, The Annual Home and Garden Idea Fair, WSU Clark County Extension courses, and presentations to local groups.

Pamphlets and handouts are distributed whenever possible and informational signs are posted in public areas where control work is done.

Community volunteers, recruited through advertisements, local high schools, and the county website, also receive training and information at weed-pulling and planting events.



Growing Green tree planting

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Vegetation Management Division

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